

NEW ADDRESS: Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701 301/473-8186

November 26, 1967

Dear Mr. Niles,

Thanks for the transcript of your important first meeting. I didn't respond earlier because I was off on a speaking trip. This took me to a place I visited six months ago and to two places I visited a year ago. I found opposition to the war greater in all places, a willingness to articulate opposition that didn't exist before, an increasing tendency to consider President Johnson responsible for the assassination, and an even more dishonest press.

With all of this, I also found increasing frustration, a feeling that the individual, whatever his reason for opposing the war, was powerless.

If opposition to the war is a healthy sign, and it is, the other things I observed are signs of an unhealthy society. Particularly dangerous is the sense of frustration, the feeling that the individual is powerless.

I detect in the appearance of a new and unabashedly dishonest book on the Kennedy assassination, a clue to these fears and what I fear because of them. Here is a carefully-manufactured job of Hitlerian doctrine, seemingly a strong criticism of the government, it actually is a formula for getting the government off the hook, for seeming to resolve the problems while settling nothing. You have, undoubtedly, noted the vast campaign behind it. For such a book ample funds are available and the promotions are effective.

It is all part of a whole. The pressing danger is of fascism, regardless of how it is described. It is real. It is present. It is, to those who are on the spot, a seeming solution.

And it is not enough for those few with the understanding and willingness-and financial capacity- to do a single thing and say it, for a while, discharges their responsibilities. However we can, each of us must ceaselessly do what can be done to preserve what we have and can have. Those with the financial capacity bear the greatest obligation.

This awful, dehumanizing war, terrible as it is, is not the cause. It is the effect. The cause is policy and the change of policy that came about only because of the assassination. It is glib shorthand to say that Kennedy had "advisers" in Vietnam and had increased their number. He was changing policy there and everywhere when he was gunned down. He had become the first President in recent years to seek to escape the captivity of his own advisers, each of whom had a special interest in controlling what the President knew and how he reacted. It is at this point that he was murdered. If we are to save our society, eliminate the unending tragedies in Vietnam and those yet to explode, it is here that we must begin. Otherwise, we can succeed no more than the doctor who treats the sore when there is cancer.

Sincerely,

Harold W. Smith